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A Weekly Publication

OF

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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

And Jesus said unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?"—Mark viii., 17-18.

There is very much Scripture which always has to be interpreted with an allowance for the different languages in which it was written, the different nations out of which it sprang, and the difference which there is between Oriental modes of thought and Oriental expressions, and our modern methods of thinking and methods of expression. This is apparent, not unfrequently, in the teachings of our Lord. For although the "style," as it is called, which was employed by the Saviour, seems at the first thought to be very simple, it was evidently full of enigma, of paradox, of parable, of proverb, of "dark sayings," as they were called,—unlike our philosophical mode. The immediate occasion of these words which I have read, and which are severer in seeming than they were in fact, veiled under the form of rebuke, was a caution given by Christ to his disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod." Their ear caught that word *leaven*; and they took it literally as meaning the physical idea.

We smile at their simplicity in supposing the rebuke to be because they had taken no bread with them—for that was their interpretation of it. And he rebukes them for not understanding him. He recalls to them the miracles by which he created for thousands an ample supply of bread and of meat; and it is as if he had said, "How could you suppose that, because you had taken no leaven with you, I cautioned you against the leaven of the Pharisees, meaning that you must not borrow their leaven, nor make bread in their troughs? It is another thing that I taught; namely, that you should follow, not their teachings but mine, and understand, as it is time that you should understand, spiritual things, having been so long with me, and having had so much instruction." This is the purport of the passage. They had the means

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of understanding him, and they should have employed those means. This is his way of saying, "Every man is responsible for the use of his own faculties in ascertaining all the truth which is necessary for his conduct. *You have eyes; why do you not see? You have ears, why do you not hear?*—these senses standing for faculties at large.

Men are equipped with all necessary faculties for their guidance, both in the physical and in the moral world, and they are practically held responsible, in consequence, for the right use of their faculties, and for right judgments formed by means of them. However many helps there may be in the world, there are no substitutes for a man's own judgment and choice and action. However many things there may be in which men may transfer a part of themselves, as it were, to others, there is a central element in every man that is untransferable; and every man must stand for himself, think for himself, find out truth for himself, and follow for himself that which is found out. Whoever may help him, and whatever may throw light upon the problem, are collateral. He is the principal. And this is not the law of certain prominent and strong men: it is a law which belongs to the race. It is the moral economy under which all natural laws are administered in their relations to men; under which all civil laws are administered; under which all moral laws are administered.

This is a principle so profound, and it touches so many questions, that I shall feel at liberty to go into it a little more at length before I make the applications of it.

Responsible individualism is the constituent element of government and of society, whether you regard society as framed of God, or as fashioned of man. It is not, then, the design of things that a man should simply go right; because if to go right had been all that was meant, it would have been far easier to make all men go right by making them differently. No puppet goes wrong. Make a doll, put the machinery to it, and turn the crank, and it will go just as you mean it shall, every time, for a hundred times, and never make a mistake; but it is a puppet when you have got through—no more, and no less. And if men's merely going right had been all that was desired, they could have been made after a very different pattern. And there might have been a great economy of materials practiced. Far less would be necessary to make a man that should simply go when the crank was turned. If that had been all that was needed, perfect men could very easily have been made. People seem to think that to live about right is all that is required. Not at all. That is not the end. Living right is only the means to an end. It is an incident to something greater. The divine idea in the creation of the world, seems to me to be *manhood*—bulk of being, variety of being, power of being. And going

right is simply the way by which men are to come to that augmented being.

That men should find out what is right, therefore, and learn how to fulfill what they find out, is as important as that they should go right. It is the finding out that makes men grow. It is the exertion to do what you have ascertained against difficulties, that proves, develops, forms and authenticates manhood. For, to be a self-centered individual, plenary in reason and moral sense, to be *like God*—that is the design which God says he is working out in man, in the heaven, and upon earth. And the method by which he works men toward that grand design is to lay on every man the responsibility of using the faculties with which he has been endowed, in their own spheres; putting him to find out the truth, to guide himself by that which he finds out; giving him ample helps, collateral suggestions, pattern, counsel and law, giving him none of these things in such a peremptory form as to supersede his own individual liberty and responsibility for finding that which is right, and then doing that which he has found out.

This is true of our senses, and of all their commerce in the natural world. Our eye, our ear, our hand may be trained; but after all, there is no training, there can be no training, there never was any training, which did not leave the individual responsibility untouched. If a man says, "To my eyes that is level," when it is precipitous, and I accept his sight in lieu of my own, and walk over the precipice, I tumble to the bottom none the less because I take his sight instead of my own. If a man says, "It is two yards," and I stand just a yard from him as he swings a whip, I none the less take the whip because I believe him instead of believing myself. It is for me to see, and to follow my seeing. I may help myself; I may get what light I can from sources outside of myself; I may form my judgment in any complex case by the assistance of other people's senses; but, after all, I am the pope of my own senses; I am the sovereign of my own faculties; and it is designed, either that I should form a judgment, and act according to it, or that I should take the penalties and the consequences. And all the early part of our life is spent in learning how to use our senses; in learning how to be a being. The child grows first by learning how himself to use every muscle, every bone, every limb; how then to use those higher senses which stand intimately connected with mentality; and how, afterwards, little by little, having gone from sensuousness to intelligence, to go from mere intelligence to sentiment, and from sentiment to *moral* sentiment, or to that which is right, and not to that which is fact alone.

I do not undertake to say that we may not derive great benefit from the foregoing example of others; from what they have learned. Books

may help us train our senses; but no book, and no teacher, and no person outside of me can ever dispossess me of this, that I am primarily set to find out by the use of my senses all the truth that belongs to the sphere in which they act. *The sovereignty of the individual*—a term very much abused, and yet a term that may convey a correct idea—is asserted throughout every sphere of man's action.

It is the same in the transaction of secular business. It is the best way, although it is the hardest way, to hold every person responsible for his self-helpfulness, for his individual correctness of judgment, and individual correctness of measures or means applied to ends. Men seek to find out ways which shall release them from liability to mistakes. They marvel, frequently, that there have not been such ways found out. They think that when the millennial day comes, things will be so organized in this world that all things will come symmetrically, and that men will come into affairs naturally, peacefully, happily, every man finding everything done to hand, or else the doing of it being so natural and so easy that he will have no thought, no care, no ache, no study, no responsibility. Never: *never:* NEVER!

If iron is to be made into a tool, it has to go into the fire, and on to the anvil. Otherwise a tool can never be made of it. And there never will come a day in which a man can be made into a man, while the economy of this world lasts, except by going into the fire, and on to the anvil, and under the hammer. Manhood, if it comes at all, must come through a great many mistakes, and a good deal of pain from those mistakes.

Now, take a man in business. If he is readily expert in that business, and he becomes so by easy ways, it must be a very simple business. No man ever becomes, in secular affairs, broad, multifarious in power, eminent and pre-eminent, except it be by a tentative series of endeavors; except it be by a probation which implies perplexity, mistake, blunder, a thousand painful forms of experience.

Is that necessary? Was it necessary to the original conception of such a world as God was pleased to create? It certainly is the fact in respect to this world that he did create. What other worlds he may may have created, I do not know; but so far as this world is concerned the divine law is in that direction. It is laying the responsibility upon all the powers of a man, in his secular affairs, of finding out the truth, of ascertaining that which is right. The skillful, the lucrative, the honorable, the pleasurable—all these things are found out. And after the world has been finding out for six thousand years and more, no man can be born now, and not have to find out just as much as they did who were of the first generation. For no man ever transmitted his experience to anybody else. Really an experience does not become mine till I have realized it in my own action.

A father brings up his children. He has gone through the school of experience. He has committed innumerable mistakes: and he can point to this or that mistake and save the child from it, and so abbreviate his course. But there is one thing that parents never can do: they never can bring up their child so that he will be a skillful man of the world, without suffering; without committing blunders; without falling into endless mistakes; without having been obliged to ply to the very root his own faculties, his observation, his judgment and his will. That you cannot help. Everybody must go through that school or else he has no business in this world.

It is precisely the same in civil life. A government that thinks for its people, or that undertakes to think for them, dwarfs them at once. Such a government is what is called a *paternal government*, and is the fool's ideal of a government. It is a government of fatuity. It is a government that thinks just how its people ought to act, and then lays down all its thoughts in exact concatenation, and then has physical motives by which the whole people train as if they were but a machine. Such a government may be called *paternal*, and men may admire the order of such a government; but it has no education in it. It has no developing power in it. It is a machine, and it makes men machines. And there never was an ecclesiastical or civil government that undertook to think for men, and tell them how to think, and to act for them, and tell them how to act, that it did not take from them the power of thinking and acting to any purpose. There was never a government of Church or State that took from men the necessity of individual responsibility, that made men that were worth having.

As I shall show, the sublimest undertaking of it was in the Jewish economy. "What the law could not do in that it was weak," says the apostle. It was a trial and a failure. And if that failed, there is nothing else of the sort that will ever succeed. But I shall speak more at length upon that in a few moments.

Minute rules for conduct, for the sake of superseding personal responsibility on the part of every single citizen, makes machine-men. It seems easier to live in such a way as this. Men think it abbreviates the processes of life. But then, it generates a life that is not worth having. It is not in analogy with nature. It is not the design of nature to make a grand city, but to make grand citizens. It is not important that there should be a magnificent nation, but it is important that the individual elements of the nation should be large, and self-helpful, and vital in thought and in purpose. Yet, time and history have run perpetually to making, not full men, but something less than men. Churches, cities, nations, have been built up as if the aggregate name was a more important thing than the special element. It is the

same in our moral sphere. Principles are given to us. Men find out the applications of these principles on every side, in themselves, in their fellow men, in their minor organizations, and in their larger reach, for time and for eternity. The responsibility is laid on us, not simply of finding out what has been told us, but of finding out a great deal that has not been told us. We are not to suppose that men are to be left absolutely alone in such a world as this without any helps; without any foregoing experience, recorded and reported; without any guides whatever. But in all cases the man is the superior—not the guide. He is not to be judged by, but is to judge his creed, his church, and his conduct. Man is superior to his circumstances. I do not say in point of view, but I do say in point of ideal, this is the design of God, plainly indicated. All helps are good, except the helps that smother self-help. All helps are to be employed as so many excitants of one's self. All other men's thinkings are good for you if they make you think. If they overlay your thoughts with what is called "knowledge," they are bad for you. Other men's thoughts are like manure on farmed soil, not designed to be the thing that is good, but to stimulate to the production of that which is good. And so all teaching, and all thinking, and all guiding, and all experience given to man, are given to him only as so many stimulants to develop in him more power than he would have had without them. And they are doing their work when they are making him work; but not when they supersede his work, or substitute something else for it. These things are helps, therefore—not governors.

There is an exception in cases where a man is not a man. A child is to be helped. During the time that he is an animal, and not a man, the experience of the parent is to be substituted for his lack of experience. And we do not let him come into this reasoning at all.

There is only one other exception, namely, that of persons who are children all their life long—for there are some so weak that they never outgrow being children, and go out of life the same size as they came into it. I admit that there is to be an economy in every wise society, to take care of the feeble—the feeble-minded.

But these are always abnormal, exceptional cases; whereas, the great principle goes on, that it is the divine idea of the development of man to bring to bear upon him such stimulating influences as shall compel him, having eyes, to see, having ears, to hear, and having reasoning faculties, to think, so that he shall be educated, and self-educated, and be made more a man by that very process of development.

Now for some applications.

The first is, to throw light on democratic governments, and also on absolute governments, of which latter we have had a very lively

specimen in Paris. Some of our traveled popinjays come back from Europe, talking about the superb order of Paris. They talk about the splendid postal system there, and the splendid civic systems. They tell us that you can walk through the streets there, in the middle of the night, in any direction. The police arrangements, they say, are so complete, that one is perfectly safe. They represent everything as being orderly in the highest degree there. When they go away, they are proud of our democratic government; but when they return, they are full of admiration for autocratic governments. "Look," they say, "at the condition of New York city? What kind of a government is there there? What safety is there there for a man's reputation, his money, or his life? All is misrule and discord in that city. Here is self-government for you," these aforesaid popinjays say, "and there is autocratic government: give me that. Give me a government where there is order and peace; where the great ends of society are perfectly served; and where there is safety for life and property and reputation."

Is that the only thing, then, in this world that is good for anything —the safety of reputation, the safety of property, and the safety of life? The least valuable thing in this world is life, frequently. If you could only make a good selection of men, there would be nothing so good as killing, in this world. The trouble is that promiscuous killing generally goes from the bad toward the good. But the earth is burdened with worthless population.

Now, that which the autocratic government of a European city accomplishes, is this: it takes away from its citizens the drill of thinking. It deprives them of the opportunity of learning how to take the responsibility of organizing order among themselves. And that which is an apparent blot upon democratic institutions (and it is a difficulty; it is a penalty; it is a pain) is, that it does not immediately accomplish as good ends as an absolute and aristocratic government. There is less personal safety; there are more, I was going to say, "jobs," under a democracy than under an autocracy. But this last I take back: there are more "jobs" under an autocracy than under a democracy—though it will surprise you to hear me say it. There are are apparent advantages in an autocratic government. But in the long run, a population that has been brought up under democratic rule (I am not speaking of our party phrase, but of the broad philosophic sense of the term *democracy*) in the long run a community brought up to think for itself, to organize for itself, to take the penalties of it, to bear the evils which accompany it until they become unbearable, and then to cure them, and so to cure them that they shall not break out again—in the long run they are superior in intelligence, in genius and power, to a generation of

men that have been brought up in the puppet order of Paris, which some men so covet and want.

But these men, without manhood in themselves, do not miss it in other people; and so they go to foreign cities, and come back and brag over them, and dispraise our own cities. Not that there are not evils that go along with self-government; not that there are not monstrous evils under a democratic government which wait long, that the sword under an autocratic government cures quick—for the sword does cure diseases quick. But while it cures the diseases, it destroys citizenship. On the other hand, citizenship here is saved while the evils are waiting long to be cured by the citizens themselves. A republican government in a hundred points is weaker than an autocratic government; but in this one point it is the strongest government that ever the sun shone upon—that it has educated a race of men that *are* men. And it is to make men that the world was built—though you might not suspect it by the specimens.

If, then, your conception of municipal government is a city, wound like a watch, in which all the elements are simply meant to go with absolute regularity; if what you want is government like a watch which runs just so every day from year to year, in the same temperature, without variation, never changing, and keeping perfect time, then an autocracy is what you want. But if you want a government that shall develop human nature, and make it fresh, and various, and always new and progressive, then you cannot have one of these regulated governments. You must let men find their own way, and bump their own heads, curing the bumps; you must let them fall into mistakes, and learn by falling into them to keep out of them; and by and by, when enough have done it, by coöperation they will cure the evil. Sometimes the constitution breaks down before the cure can be established; but where there is a constitution that can bear the strain, and the cure is established, it is a glorious cure. And give me strong men rather than strong cities.

Secondly. We see, in the light of these principles, the contrast actually existing between Judaism and Christianity. When the Israelites were brought out of Egypt they were slaves. The great principle which Moses undertook to inculcate was *righteousness*. Righteousness means acting according to a straight line, as it were. He laid down ordinances and laws which regulated every part of every man's conduct in the nation. Those ordinances and laws went into men's dwellings, and into their industrial occupations. There was an autocracy established in Church and State; and their religion and patriotism were one and the same thing. It undertook to pervade everything. Every day was marked out, and every hour of every day,

for worship. The particular place where they were to worship was pointed out. They were instructed how they were to worship, and what they were to worship with. Not only were they instructed that they were to worship with certain elements, but they were instructed how those elements were to be prepared, running into the most extraordinary minuteness, until men were perfectly meshed and webbed by provisions for doing everything right. And as long as they were very low and weak, this economy carried them up, and educated them until, if they could escape they would be benefitted, but if not they would be injured. That which is the best thing for a child when he is fourteen years of age is often the worst thing for him when he is twenty-four. Clothes that are a very good fit for children when they are six years old, are a very bad fit for them when they are sixteen years old, and must be let out, or they will split out in every direction. The Mosaic system was one of rigid laws. The Christian system was one without any instrumentation; without one single institution appointed rigorously; without one single point that represented the precision and imperativeness of the Mosaic institution. Our Lord instituted a spiritual kingdom, and put the stimulus upon men to develop reason and conscience and spirituality, and left them to do it in perfect freedom.

This does not argue that Christianity should not have days; but they are not to be "Thus saith the Lord" days. It does not argue that there should not be institutions; but they are not to be rigorously authoritative or obligatory institutions. They are to be institutions such as we shall have found to be useful, and which we shall therefore use, not because they are imposed upon us, but because they are useful. Christianity lets us have all manner of helps. But liberty is the essential element of it. Institutions, ordinances, creeds, churches, priests, all manner of imposed helps, Christianity ignores as obligatory. It permits them if men want to use them; but it takes the ground that if they do use them it is because they choose to, and not because God obliges them to. Christianity has infinite liberty of appropriation; but it is not under obligation to have a church, nor a Sabbath, nor a creed, nor any other thing. It is free.

Judaism was a system of precise institutions. Christianity is a charter of liberty. Judaism brought men up a certain way, and could not go a step further. Then came Christ, and unfolded the supernal manhood of God in the flesh. And from that point human nature sprang up, and sprang out. And if Christianity had been kept to this its fundamental idea; if its principle of liberty, its stimulating power, its conception as to the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation, had been its main force, we should have been advanced a great many ages beyond the point at which we are now.

In the third place, the reason why Christianity has not done more, is because this principle of life has been largely ignored. Christianity fell into the old tendency very speedily of providing for men, and not leaving them to provide for themselves. It undertook to order men's worship through its Church—the great mediæval church, which is the most sublime, elaborate, and astonishing system of organization that the world was ever cursed with: *blessed*, they say; *cursed I* say Christianity, enshrined in this vast catacomb of mazes and labyrinths, has stood right in the way of itself. It has undertaken to do again, by old barbaric instruments, what it should have outgrown, and what the world is fast outgrowing. And spiritual liberty was deposed, and ecclesiastical despotism took the place of it.

Now, if I were going to have either, I would have Judaism. The old Jewish system of religion was the nearest to sublime natural religion of any system in the world; that is, it came nearer to the aspects of material nature than did the superficial moralities and refinements that grew up under the great mediæval system, and are embodied in it. I should prefer Judaism, pure and simple, to Romanism, pure and simple. It is more manly, more natural, more divine, more stimulating.

I remark, fourthly, that this is the fundamental difference between all hierarchal churches and all democratic churches, or churches of the common people. One of these modes of organization attempts, in a ministerial way, to provide for every act of worship, for every ceremony, for every belief, for every routine, for all government. The other of these modes of organization inspires men to provide these things for themselves, and lets them have liberty to do it.

Oftentimes I hear men say, "I do not believe in Congregationalism, it leaves everything so untied, so hap-hazard. It has no government, no process of order. Men, under it, do not know exactly what to do, and do pretty much as they have a mind to. I believe in a church that just divides the year up, and divides all the chapters of the Bible up so that there shall be a certain portion of Scripture to be read every day; so that when a man gets up in the morning, he shall not be at a loss what to do, but shall only have to see what day it is, and then look and find the passages of Scripture that he is to read, and the prayers that he is to say, and directions as to the other duties he is to perform It is pleasant to have everything arranged for one in that way." It *is* very convenient; but is it better for a man to be baptized into a specific system, and never take off his swaddling clothes, and have a nurse to take him up as a babe and carry him through life, and never have anything to think about, nor anything to do; never be obliged to vex himself with responsibility; but lie brooded and sucking all through life? There are a great many who have that conception; and

any church that comes near to that; that is to say, any church that does everything for a man; any church that takes from a man the necessity of thinking for himself, and thinking till his head aches; any church that takes all perplexities out of a man's way, so that he is never annoyed, but is always easy—any such church just suits them. But no true church should undertake to mechanically organize life so as to supersede or cover down this fundamental principle of God's word—the necessity of every man's organizing his own life. Such churches are very much in vogue. And far be it from me to undertake to say that there is not a liberty on the part of men to organize such churches. Humanly speaking there is such a liberty. What I am pointing out is this: that the educating power of such churches is not so great as the educating power of those churches which seem to be far more scattered and disorderly—but seem so only because the principle of individual development does drive men asunder more than the principle of an organized government, and because this principle of personal liberty makes men strong and robust.

This principle is more valuable than the simple idea of order—though I recognize the order, and well know that the distribution of both elements is desirable. Order, the habit of coördinate acting, is important; but it is not sufficient. There need to be, in addition to this, the principles of individual opportunity and individual obligation.

Fifthly, this question takes hold of the difficulties which men find in the Bible. People often say, "I cannot believe that that is a revelation, because nobody seems to know what it teaches. There are infinite diversities among believers of the Bible as to the doctrines which it contains. A revelation from God, it seems to me, must settle something. How can the Bible be God's revelation when it is so full of obscurities; when it is so full of doctrines that are enigmatical; when there are apparent contradictions in it; when there are historical collisions in it? It cannot be from God; for if it were it would be perfect." Would it? Was not this material world from God? and is it perfect? Did not it begin in germs? and did not these germs go through all forms of development—that is to say, from the lowest stage of imperfection clear up to the highest? And is not that the peculiar characteristic in the world—germination, and development all the way up from the lowest to the highest point? And is not that, if I may so say, the trade-mark of God—early imperfection, and late, self-evolved perfection?

If, therefore, there was to be a divine revelation, do you suppose that God would have begun by making every thing so plain at the beginning that men should have been saved all the perplexity of finding out the truth for themselves? Is it not more likely that he would have

done just as he has done—given men gradually all manner of traditions that have been handed down from the earliest ages, as indications of the way in which the race had developed, and left them to work out principles from these?

Revelation is in strict analogy with the world itself; and both of them are conformed to this one central element. Having eyes, we must learn to use them, and must learn to see right with them. Having ears, we must learn to use them, and must learn to hear right with them. Having reason we must learn to use that, and must take the responsibility of using it right. And having a moral sense, we must learn to employ it in finding out the ways of God toward men. For you have got to find them out if you are to know them. Another may help you; but, after all, the central responsibility rests in you.

But men say, "It would be so much easier if one knew just what duty is, and knew how to do it." But the finding it out is the most wholesome part of it. That is the very thing which keeps men awake, and keeps them thinking, and makes them discriminating. Finding out what is true, is just as important in education as the truth itself when it is found out. And finding out the way; the very thing that makes men puff and murmur—the wear and care and anxiety to know what they ought to think and know—these things are a part of God's great educating scheme in this world. A revelation, therefore, which took all care and all difficulties out of the way, would, by so much, lack the nature of being a divine one.

Lastly, in such a world as this, where the great central principle is that every man is responsible to God and not to his fellowmen; responsible for his thoughts, for his feelings, for his character, for his development into all strength and stature of perfect manhood—in such a world as this, there is every reason why men that sit under the constant teaching of the Gospel and Gospel institutions, should cease, and should a long time ago have ceased, from looking at others for models and for motive power. We are accustomed to grow under the superstitious influence of a mediæval age to such an extent that men scarcely think that they can live or die without the priest. The child that is born without the baptismal touch is not fairly born. The child cannot die and go out of the world unless the priest prepares him. If men are sick, the minister must come to them. The man of the house may be a great deal deeper and wiser and stronger; but then, he is not "ordained." We feel that there is a certain sanctity in the church, and that men must have something of this outside ecclesiastical influence before they can venture forward. Nay, men seem to go to churches very much as fishes come in shoals upon the coast when the net is thrown around them and they are drawn in. Men wait for revivals; men wait for their

neighbors to talk with them; men wait for the minister to go after them. Men that have come to a degree of seriousness which is ample as a motive power; men that have long been instructed in the way of duty to men, and of love to God, and of love to men; men that have sat under the teachings of the word of God from week to week and from year to year—such men wait for some forth-putting influence that shall bring them in, irrespective of their own volition.

Now this is not becoming in you. You ought long ago to have been independent of these collateral helps. There are many persons in this congregation who ought to come to the question of personal religion directly, and rise up, and go home, and say, "The question has been thought over, and has been settled: I am a Christian." Men come to me and say, "I am serious." It is an invitation for me to take them by the hand as I would a little child, who was learning to walk, and lead them, and teach them how to walk. But full-grown men, instructed from their cradle, knowing just as much of the essential truths of religion as I do myself, ought not to come to me in leading strings, nor oblige me to go to them. You ought to stand up in your households, and say to your children, "From this day forward I serve the Lord Jesus." And you ought to report yourself from the household to the church, and say, "I have chosen God's service." It is not becoming, and it is not necessary, that your neighbors should force you out, or that there should be got up for you some special excitement or summer of revival, in order that you may be willing that the ice in you should thaw out and flow down. It is in every man's power to choose the service of God, and to begin that service, and declare it to the individual, to the family, to the church. There ought not, in such a church as this, to be a month in which there should not be men and women coming to me with hope blossoming and joy effulgent, saying, "Behold what the Lord has done for me!" But as it is, men wait to be helped.

When the man that was paralytic would go down into the pool, others nimbler than he, stepped down before him; and that was his plea for help. But if some great sturdy fellow that had the use of his limbs had stood round there waiting for some one to take him up and carry him into the pool, what would you have thought of him? And yet, there are multitudes of men standing around the pools of salvation; who are instructed, and who are full of power, and self-helping power, and yet no step do they take. They are waiting for some one to take them up and carry them.

My Christian brethren, this is not right or manly. This is not in the spirit of religion. Religion is designed to make you, having eyes, to employ them; and having ears, to employ them; and having a reason, to employ that; and having a moral sense, to develop that; and

having a power of choice, to enter upon the noblest choice and the highest career. And do it because this is the way that God meant we should be the most manly, and develop the most perfectly, and be most worthy of him. And when we see him as he is, we shall hear the welcome that will greet our emancipation into ever-abiding manhood in the heavenly land.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We adore thee, Almighty God. Thou hast made the heaven and the earth; thou hast created man; thou hast given him laws and ordinances, and established government; and through this government thou hast still led the race as a flock. We rejoice that thy benignity and thy patience are over all this world. Slowly as man has toiled toward knowledge, and little as he has found; much as he has degraded himself; strong as have been the passions that have borne sway; feeble as have been the impulses toward good, thou, O God! hast been unwearied. Thou hast not cast aside thy work; but with infinite patience and gentleness thou hast still educed good from evil, and by long-suffering saved the race. And we believe that thou wilt yet, in the day to come, brighter and clearer than any that have yet dawned, bring forth perfect holiness; and that the earth shall see thy salvation. For that blessed day of prediction we long. We look wearily for its signs, and behold them not; and yet we believe that the kingdom of heaven is as a leaven; and that it works in the hearts of men; and that thou art bringing to pass the counsels of thy will, though by ways which we discern not. And we rejoice that we are permitted to be laborers together with God in our individual selves; in our households; in our neighborhoods; in the nation where we dwell. We thank thee for all the mercies which thou hast vouchsafed to us through Jesus Christ our Lord; for our hope of forgiveness; for that faith which has been breathed into our hearts; and for all that expectation of immortality which cheers the dreary days of this mortal life. We thank thee for all the blessedness which we have had in times of sorrow; for the communion of the Holy Ghost; for the quickening influence of thy Spirit by which we have discerned the truth; by which we have been fortified in the hour of temptation; by which our hearts have been encouraged when fainting and failing. We rejoice in our personal hope and in our personal expectation. And we pray that thou wilt join with us, in this experience, all our children, and all others whom we love. And grant that the work of the Gospel may go from heart to heart in this congregation; and that there may be none left out; none who shall not know experimentally the love of Jesus, and who shall not have felt the power of the Spirit of God, and who shall not understand something of that life of the Spirit—the soul's higher life—by which they shall walk with God, and, though yet on the earth, hold communion with heaven.

We pray for any that are degraded; for any that are despondent; for any that are in affliction in over-measure; for any that are ridden by anxiety, and that are filled with fears. Will the Lord be gracious unto them, and spread abroad Thine hands over them, and say, Peace be unto you.

We pray for all that are in perplexity; that know not the way of duty. May they be able to discern it, and find out the right way to walk therein, and to gain strength by their intuition.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy light to shine upon all those who are teaching others. Help our Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes, both all that teach in them, and all that are taught. We pray that their souls may be knit together in the bonds of holy love.

We pray that thou wilt be with all those who go forth to seek the outcast and the neglected, and to bear the Gospel to unwonted places, where no Sabbath is, and where no teachers are. Will the Lord fill their hearts with a holy fear; and may they never be weary of their labors of love. We beseech of thee that thou wilt prepare thy servants for all the events of thy providence—for sickness; for life; for burdens; for prosperity; for disappointments; for grievous troubles. Grant that we may walk expecting

evermore thy strength in thy presence which shall be to us, in the flame or in the flood alike, strength, and succor, and release.

Bless, we pray thee, the churches that are gathered of every name this day. May the Spirit of the Lord be in the midst of them all. And we pray for thy servants that preach, that they may be made to discern the truth, and have fervor given them that the truth may be as good seed sown in good soil. We pray for the day when there shall be no more divisions; when each man shall be content to let each worship God according to the dictates of his conscience; and when men shall love those that are apart from them.

Grant that the spirit of undying love may spread, and that sympathy may take the place of persecution, and that thy name may be honored in all the forms in which men are seeking to do thy will. We pray that thou wilt bless the nations of the earth, and bring in that day so long waiting and so long needed, of final and universal peace, when men shall no longer wage war, nor provoke the causes of it; and when love shall supersede anger and cruelty, and mercy shall fill the earth.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt let the truth sink down into our hearts, and abide there. May we never be the believers of cunningly devised fables. May we be filled with the spirit of manliness. May we be gentle. May we be fair-minded. May we be amiable—not arrogant nor vain. May we desire to know what is truth. Grant that we may desire our true selves more than everything else—more than houses or lands; more than honor; more than fame; more than all pleasures. May we desire to be built up in the essential elements of a true and Christian manhood, that we may be presented before the throne not unworthy of the divine Eye, O ,eternal Father! when we shall be perfected without spot or blemish, or any such thing.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant, then, thy Spirit, which coerces none, but helps all, but which sweetly shines as the sun. And like the sun, may it bring forth all pleasant plants of righteousness in the garden of the Lord.

Revive thy work in the hearts of all those that already have known thee, but have forgotten thee; and of those that follow thee but afar off; and of those that are cumbered with care; and of those that are cankered with passion; and of those that are bewildered and lost in the maze of the world. Oh! that all might hear thee calling to them, and rise up, and in their plenary power accept thy service, and love thee, and rejoice in the glorious hope of immortality.

And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

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